

(PAUL RADIN: NEW PERSPECTIVES
ON ETHNOLOGY

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in partial fulfillment of the
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degree

Master of Arts
in
Anthropology

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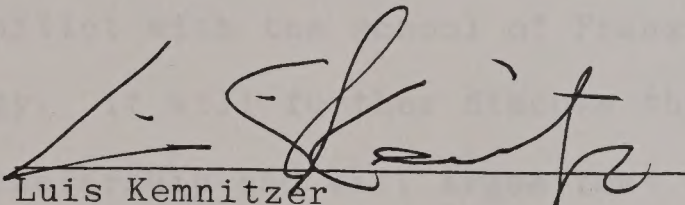
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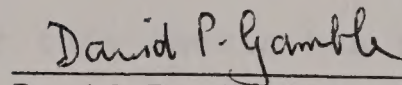
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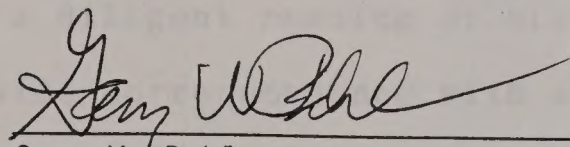
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Luis Kemnitzer
Professor of Anthropology



David P. Gamble
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology



Gary W. Pahl
Professor of Anthropology

PAUL RADIN: NEW PERSPECTIVES
ON ETHNOLOGY

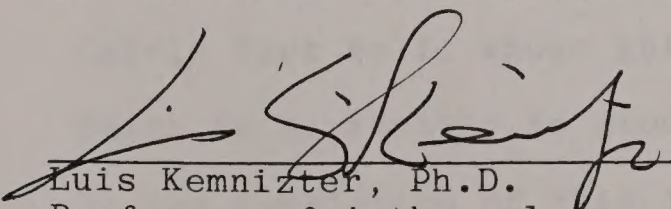
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This thesis devotes itself to a study of Paul Radin, a student of Franz Boas, who differed with the Boasian method of ethnology and fashioned his own.

The work will dwell on Radin's intellectual antecedents; his conflict with the school of Franz Boas and their methodology. It will further discuss the dimensions of his scholarship and will argue that his concepts of ethnology have relevance in late 20th century anthropology.

Material for this thesis has been gathered through interviews and discussions with individuals who knew Paul Radin, by a diligent reading of his work and abstracts and by a wide correspondence with academics and non-academics who knew him in his lifetime.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.


Luis Kemnitzer, Ph.D.
Professor of Anthropology

31 March 89
Date

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It would be impossible to name all the people who have made it possible for this thesis to be written. Over thirty individuals have taped recollections of Paul Radin and have discussed him with me. Innumerable others have corresponded with me, giving me a deeper insight into his personality and erudition. They presented me with both the scholar and the man. My greatest help came from Mrs. Doris Woodward Radin, Dr. Radin's widow, and I am deeply indebted to her for her guidance and help.

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INTRODUCTION

The late 19th and 20th centuries were periods of prolific ethnological research in North America. As American Indian societies (those that had survived the genocide of the previous three centuries) seemed to be dying out, there was an urgency among ethnographers to record what could be salvaged from societies that then appeared on the brink of extinction.

The dominant school of anthropology in the early 20th century was that of Franz Boas. Originally a geographer, who planned and led the Arctic expedition of 1883-84, he turned to the study of anthropology after living among the Eskimo. A German Jew, sensitive to racial bias, he deplored the methodology and presuppositions of the classical evolutionists of the 19th century which bore within them concepts of the racial inferiority of indigenous societies.

He trained his students to adopt a humanistic and historical approach in investigating and describing societies in North America. In time, however, the magnitude of the task of recording these groups fragmented the school of Boas into increasingly

quantitative approaches to ethnology.

Of Boas' many students, two differed notably from their teacher and sought to develop their own methods. In linguistics this was Edward Sapir. In ethnology the student was Paul Radin.

The Formative Years

Paul Radin was born in Lodz, Russian Poland, on April 2, 1883. He was the son of a reform rabbi who had come from Russia to be educated in Germany and who had married a German Jewish wife. Paul Radin was the youngest of three sons born to the couple. His father Adolph Radin was a scholar and linguist, in addition to being a rabbi, and had taught at the German universities until the Bismarck Laws made it impossible for him to do so. He then took a rabbinate in Lodz for a brief period of time, where Paul was born.

The family immigrated to the United States in 1884 when Radin was a year old, settling in Elmira, New York, where Adolph Radin became for five years the first reform rabbi of Congregation B'Nai Israel. He then moved to New York City where he became noted for his social work among newly arrived immigrants as well as for his position as the first Jewish rabbi to work with prisoners in penal institutions.

There had been five children born to Adolph and Johanna-Theodore Radin. The only two girls, Reva and Helen, died within days of one another in a scarlet fever epidemic in New York City. The second son, Max

Radin, became a noted jurist and was associated with the Law School of the University of California, Berkeley, for over 30 years. The youngest son, Paul, was to become the scholar in the family.

Paul Radin entered the College of the City of New York as a sub-freshman at the age of fourteen, graduating, after a five year course, in 1902. The training at this school was exacting and it was intended for an intellectual elite rather than for the general citizen (Du Bois 1960:ix).

After his graduation from college, Radin began to study zoology at Columbia University, but soon tired of it and became much more interested in the history that was then being taught there by James Harvey Robinson.

Robinson's humanistic and liberal approach to history would strongly influence Radin in his own scholarship (Du Bois 1960:x).

From 1905 to 1907 Radin spent two years in Europe. In his first year he studied at Munich, under the historian and anthropologist Ranke. Ranke would serve to reinforce in Radin the influence of James Harvey Robinson. In his second year he attended the University of Berlin where he studied under both

Ehrenreich and Seler who turned his interest toward anthropology.

Exactly when he decided to make ethnology his life work is best reflected in a letter that he wrote to his friend Robert Lowie in 1907. At the time Radin was in Prague, Bohemia, and was working in the museum there with V. Frič, an ethnologist recently returned from work among the Bororo Indians of South America, assisting him in the cataloguing of his collection.

He wrote to Lowie: "What I intend to study and make my life's work is neither history nor ethnology, but both, to see just exactly and to what degree historical development still shows distinct signs of the primitive mind, and to what degree each one of us, past or present, still have undercurrents of this primitive weltanschauung" (Radin 1907).

He wrote to Lowie later that year, from Berlin: "Here I am, theoretically studying history, but am spending most of my time on ethnology" (Radin 1907).

Returning to America in 1907, Radin began to study at Columbia University under Franz Boas, taking a major in anthropology and a minor in statistics, with a second minor in history under his old teacher James Harvey Robinson.

Stanley Diamond, in Totems and Teachers, refers to Radin as a product of the Jewish Haskalah, transposed to American soil (Diamond 1981:69). I agree with Diamond.

The Haskalah was a period of enlightenment among European Jews, particularly in Germany, at a time when the ghettos were abolished and Jewish scholars began to emerge into the mainstream of the intellectual movements of their time, forming a humanistic alliance with the period of Enlightenment (Aufklärung) of German scholars. Although this was at best an uneasy alliance that lasted for only a short period of time, it was a very productive one. It produced men knowledgeable in both the intellectual currents of Judaism and those of the Germany of their period, among whom was Paul Radin's father, Adolph Radin. Paul Radin was exposed to this enlightened humanism not merely through his dynamic father but also through the constant stream of intellectuals immigrating from Europe to America who visited the Radin home in New York (Sarason 1983).

As a young boy, Radin had also been exposed to the social work that his father was involved in on the lower east side of New York. He was aware, at an early

age, of the massive immigration from Europe to America of predominantly Eastern European Jews.

Although this is purely speculative on my part, and nowhere documented, it is possible that a young Radin became aware of the dynamic of people interacting as they strove to gain a foothold in a new cultural milieu. This could easily have been the seed that would later flourish in his sensitivity to the role of the individual in society, particularly in times of rapid change.

It is not impossible that he carried into the field with him, when he went to the Winnebago, the strong awareness not only of the importance of the individual, but of the cohesive factors that allowed cultures to survive under pressure: language, myth and religion; be these cultural groups Eastern European Jews in a new and hostile "dominant" environment or Winnebago peoples under incredible pressure from the outside "dominant" society.

Radin himself was the product of a strongly communal society, by virtue of his being a Jew, for how else had the Jews of Europe survived but by this same social cohesiveness held together by the folklore, religion and lingua franca, Yiddish. In many ways this

European Jewish society was not unlike that of the Winnebago society that would become his lifelong study.

I feel that these factors should be considered when we encounter Radin's defense of the role of the individual in society and his lifelong concentration on myth and religion.

Radin's exposure to the humanistic and historical concepts of the Haskalah probably drew him to study under Franz Boas at Columbia, when he did finally decide to study anthropology, for Boas, himself a product of the Haskalah in Germany, had broken with the Evolutionary model dominant in American anthropology up to the late 19th century.

Radin was familiar not only with the intellectual currents of America but with those of England and Europe. This would later be reflected in the bibliographies of his many published works, but nowhere is it better reflected than in his work Social Anthropology (1932:411-413). That bibliography clearly reflects his wide reading of the works of English, French and German scholars as well as missionaries, psychologists, and administrators.

From British anthropology he refers to the works of A. Radcliffe-Brown, R. R. Fortune, Malinowski,

W. H. R. Rivers, and C. G. Seligman. The folklorists Andrew Lang and R. R. Marett are also included as are brilliant, independent scholars K. Rasmussen, A. C. Hollis, and W. J. and K. Rutledge.

He incorporates the work of missionaries and administrators, as people in both categories had spent many years with the societies of which they wrote, and Radin drew on their insight and understanding. We therefore find H. Calloway, R. H. Codrington, J. Roscoe, W. Smith, and A. M. Dale, all missionaries, together with such colonial administrators as M. S. Rattery and P. A. Talbot.

From the German school the bibliography reflects T. Achelist, B. Ankermann, G. Buschan, F. Graebner, and William Schmidt. From the French school, the works of Emil Durkheim, H. Hubert, and M. Mauss, as well as those of Levi-Bruhl. Psychologists Sigmund Freud and G. Roheim are also represented.

This of course does not infer that he drew only from English and European sources. The school of Boas is represented in the bibliography by Benedict, Goldenweiser, Sapir, Wissler, Kroeber, Barrett, and Loeb, as well as Boas himself. However, he reaches beyond the Boasians to the works of J. Owen Dorsey and

of Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche of the Bureau of American Ethnology, as well as those of W. Bogoras, W. Jackelson, and Leslie Spier of the Museum of Natural History of New York.

Radin would incorporate the collective perspectives into his text book just as he would draw on them in his own writings.

What we had then, in Paul Radin, was a humanist historian well grounded in the history of Western civilization, approaching an American Indian society from a world historical perspective, and in this sense, as we will set out to prove, he differed from his colleagues.

Early Field Work among the Winnebago

In 1908 he was sent by Boas to do field work with the Winnebago in Wisconsin and Nebraska. He would continue working among them until 1913, a period of five years. It was from this society that Radin would gather a vast corpus of material, to be worked and re-worked over a period of fifty years.

Radin reached the Winnebago at a pivotal time in their history. At the time of his first field work, in 1908, part of the Winnebago people were living in Wisconsin and part in Nebraska. There had been more than one relocation, courtesy of the Office of Indian Affairs and various treaties enforced by the War Department. The final of these treaties resulted in the Winnebago being shifted in 1865 to Nebraska with a provision made in 1881 that they could homestead in their original home territory, Wisconsin (Lurie 1978:690). As a result, two separate Winnebago areas of habitation existed at the time of Radin's first encounter with the society.

Those Winnebago living in Nebraska were rapidly adopting the Peyote Religion. This created a schism between the traditional Winnebago and those who had

gone over to the new religion. It is probably due to this circumstance that Radin found it comparatively easy to obtain information about the old religion. Those who had broken from it to go to the Peyote Religion no longer felt loyalty to the traditional faith and felt freer to talk about it. Indeed, in some instances, as in the case of Radin's informant Jasper Blowsnake, revealing the secrets of the old religion, which had up to that time been carefully guarded, was an almost purgative experience to rid themselves of the old ways (Radin 1933:230). By the same token, he was able to obtain accounts of conversions to the new Peyote Religion from men such as John Rave, who was attempting to introduce it to the Wisconsin Winnebago (Radin 1933:186-200). Therefore, the timing of Radin's field work among the Winnebago was then fortuitous for him.

The Role of the Individual in Society

The first indication we have of Radin's focus on the role of the individual in a society came during the period of his 1908-1913 work among the Winnebago.

At that time he obtained the life story of Sam Blowsnake, a Winnebago, who wrote out his autobiography using a syllabary in common use among the Winnebago at that time. Radin translated the material verbatim.

There had been a number of autobiographies on the lives of American Indian people before Radin wrote The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian, but none had been done in such depth and with such lack of interference with the written material. Radin did not chose to alter the text in any way. However, to explain features of Winnebago culture and ethos that might not be obvious to the reader, he provided extensive footnotes.

The work still stands as a classic documentation of the alienation of an individual from his society and of his reintegration into that society after the protagonist became a member of the Peyote Religion, which offered him a new life, albeit at the

expense of severance with many of the traditional ways of his society.

With the appearance of this work, one begins to see that Radin's commitment was to the role of the individual and individuals' dialectic with their society, being members of it, contributors to it, and not infrequently victimized by the rigid standards and expectations it imposed on them. This dynamic of what was expected from the individual and what could actually be given was a universal dilemma in no way particular to the Winnebago, but one to be encountered everywhere.

In The Method and Theory of Ethnology, Radin states: "We are dealing with specific and not generalized men and women and specific and not generalized events" (Radin 1933: 185). Radin would forever look for and stress the role of individuals in their society.

It was his contention that the individual was easier to see in non-industrial societies, for there were fewer class divisions as a rule. Even in those societies which had more "caste-like" structures, the structures were not usually rigidly stratified. Individual experience was therefore less fragmented and

dissociated. It was the totality of human experience that interested Radin. He could perceive it much more easily among societies like the Winnebago than he could, let us say, in large urban populations. He felt that the more technological a society became, the more the individual became dehumanized.

Criticism and Conflict with
the Boasian School

In the Method and Theory of Ethnology, Radin would offer a sharp critique of the Boasian approach to ethnology as being too coldly scientific and quantitative in its approach to non-Western societies. The Boasians held that non-Western cultures were unknowns, largely because to Boas this was the only truly "scientific" attitude to adopt. One began the investigation of a society assuming it to be a tabula rasa, the culture of which would only emerge through the inquiries of the ethnologist.

The danger of this approach, as Radin saw it, was:

The concept of culture, although methodologically taboo, slips in after the concept unknown from the very beginning, and the investigator proves what he has assumed. [Radin 1933:42]

What the Boasians neglected were the individuals who provided the data, and in this omission Radin saw the fundamental weakness of the Boasian methodology.

He attributed this overlooking of the individual's role to Boas' scientific background in

mathematics and geography, which, Radin felt, had followed Boas into anthropology.

As an extreme example of the total disregard of the individual in the anthropology of his day, Radin refers to Kroeber's monograph, The Superorganic (Ann Arbor, 1917), which totally ruled out all influence by the individual, attributing culture change simply to the impersonal forces of invention and diffusion.

As much as Radin disagreed, however, with the Boasian quantitative approach to ethnology, he never failed to laud Boas' role in changing the face of American anthropology forever by doing away, to a great extent, with the old and potentially racist concepts of the Evolutionists.

Boas did an inestimable service to ethnology because he was then able to show that they [non-Western societies] actually possessed cultures, and that those processes inherent in other cultures held likewise for them, an exceedingly important fact to demonstrate at a time when the world was bending the knee, somewhat obsequiously, to crude forms of evolutionism. [Radin 1933:8]

What Radin could not and would not come to terms with, however, was Boas' fear of subjectivism.

Radin therefore found himself in disagreement with the most powerful school of American anthropology of his day, that of Boas. What should be borne in mind

is that the anthropologists of the turn of the century, including of course the Boasians, usually saw mankind as conditioned by culture and ignored the formative element of these societies.

It is this that Radin was so dissatisfied with, stressing again and again the importance of the role of the individual in formulating change in these societies and introducing innovations; new implementations, new techniques, new thoughts, and new religious concepts.

He deplored the emergence of the study of culture areas, culture processes, cultural dynamics, fearing that the end result of the ethnological studies of his colleagues was that they were "merrily constructing their culture areas in pseudo-time sequences" (Radin 1933:53), the result being the breaking up of cultures into constituent elements, thereby separating culture and culture growth from its vital connection with individuals.

It was on this point of controversy that Radin and Boas came to an intellectual parting of the ways. In direct contrast to Boas, Radin was extraordinarily sensitive to the specificity of history and of the historically determined role of the individual in determining the dynamics of their own society.

Arthur J. Vidich states this clearly in the Introduction to the 1955 edition of Radin's The Method and Theory of Ethnology:

He [Radin] saw men as always capable of exceeding the bounds of their own history. One could only know what man might become by knowing what man had been in the past. [Vidich 1955:xxix]

Like F. W. Maitland, Radin felt that anthropology had a choice of being history or being nothing.

Radin himself stated what he thought was the only possible approach to ethnology:

The historical task, let me insist, is always the same: a description of a specific period and as much of the past and as much of the contact with other cultures as is necessary for the elucidation of the particular period. This can be done only by an intensive and continuous study of a particular tribe, a thorough knowledge of the language and an adequate body of texts; and this can be accomplished only if we realize, once and for all, that we are dealing with specific, not generalized, men and women and with specific, not generalized events. The recognition of specific men and women should bring with it the realization that there are all types of individuals, as it is not for instance a Crow Indian who has made such and such a statement, uttered such and such a prayer, but a particular Crow Indian. It is that particularity that is the essence of all history. [Radin 1955:184-185]

In addition, even if we realize that the history of a culture is unprocurable, no description ever carries conviction unless its recorder is convinced that it has had a history. [Radin 1955:177]

It was from this vantage point that Radin so harshly criticized the pseudo-history that he saw produced by

many of his contemporaries: Kroeber, Sapir, Benedict, Mead, Rivers, Wissler and Boas himself, to name only a few.

That Boas took a dim view of his student Radin's approach to the role of the individual in society is best reflected in a letter that he wrote to Alfred Kroeber on January 19, 1917.

I do not share your opinion in regard to his [Radin's] ability. He is a good collector, but is absolutely uncritical and without any power of clear thought. His papers on religion and on literary style show that he is easily swayed by personal sympathies--he is lacking in the icy enthusiasm that is necessary for good scientific work. [Boas 1917]

It was precisely this scientific methodology that had become part of the Boasian school that Radin rebelled against.

Personality Types in Societies:

Man of Action and Thinker

Radin's recognition of the role of individuals within societies would lead him, inevitably, to determine that there were two distinct types of individual within any society and that they could be found as easily in American Indian societies as they could in Western societies. To these different personality types he originally gave the names "the man of action" and "the thinker." Later he would add one more personality type, that of the "poet."

The thinker was the philosopher of the society and most frequently was the shaman or holy man. Radin never for a moment disputed the role of magic and religion in any society, including our own, but particularly recognized its importance in the societies that he studied, those of American Indians. He saw these as a mechanism for validating the realities of everyday life both by protecting against the harshness of these realities and by explaining them.

Nowhere does he state the differences in these personalities better than in his work The World of Primitive Man.

There exists [in societies] a psychological conditioning, comparable to one found among ourselves in two general types of temperament: the man of action and the thinker. It is conceivable that we are here dealing with basic and inherent attributes of the human psyche. We must not, of course, think of these two types as mutually exclusive. Nor should we forget that the manner in which they are allowed to function in any given society is in the last analysis determined largely by the social-economic structures which have been evolved. [Radin 1953:38]

He then goes on to describe these two different personalities.

The man of action, broadly characterized, is oriented toward the object, interested primarily in practical results and indifferent to the claims and stirrings of his inner self. He recognizes them but dismisses them, granting them no validity either in influencing or explaining his actions.

The thinker, on the other hand, although he too is definitely desirous of practical results--and for specific cultural reasons this holds to a far more marked extent among primitive people than among us--is nevertheless impelled by his whole nature to spend a considerable time in analyzing his subjective states. He attaches great importance both to their influence upon his actions and to the explanations he has developed.

He insists on a description couched either in terms of gradual progress and evolution from one to many, from simple to complex or in terms of the postulation of a cause and effect relation. In other words, some type of coordination is imperatively demanded. [Radin 1953:39]

It is from among this group of thinkers, Radin argues, that the greatest number of religious individuals are drawn--the shaman, holy men and philosophers of the society.

It was not only in the importance of the individual's role in societies that Radin disagreed with Boas and the Boasian school. His "concept" of a historical approach to the study of American Indian societies was sharply at variance with that of his mentor.

One of the frustrations that had been encountered by ethnologists in trying to record the history of American Indian societies and civilizations had been the difficulty in obtaining an accurate historical period or a framework that would set the chronology of events as they transpired in these societies. Although he was adamant about a historical approach, Boas did not feel that this was possible in working with American Indian societies, for lack of this same specific time framework.

The whole problem of cultural history appears to be a historical problem. In order to understand history it is necessary to know not only how things are but how they came to be. [Boas 1928:314]

There were several attempts to establish time perspectives for the history of North American societies. Most notably, the concept of culture areas and culture traits became popular, the historical frame of reference for the society being determined on the

hypothesis that the older elements having a wider distribution, then that place having the heaviest concentration of a trait must be the place of origin; hence, relative age of the society could be determined.

Edward Sapir constructed a framework in his Time Perspective in Aboriginal American Culture (Sapir 1916:314), based on elements of language and their diffusion among various societies.

All of these attempts of course represented very artificial constructs. Radin, approaching from a world historical perspective, differed with these constructs. As a culture historian he quite clearly understood that ethnology was never going to be an exact physical science. He had written, in 1919, to Edward Sapir:

History in its essence is a continuum without beginning or end. Everything about it is fuzzy. The moment you give it precision or clarity you can be certain that it is not being described accurately, and you can be certain that an artist is giving it a fictitious order. This really is a tragedy for such precision and order loving people as Boas and Lowie and Goldenweiser and, of course, yourself [Sapir]. It is also something of a tragedy for ethnology in America or ethnology to any person valuing precision, for this is the fuzziest and most unsatisfactory subject in the world. Scientists please keep out! What is needed are people with historical imaginations who are not afraid to have all their conclusions overthrown every ten years.

Just think of building these insecure structures. Of course, it would be much better if

you could build secure structures, but that cannot be done in history, much less in ethnology which is simply history without an authoritative chronology. [Radin 1919]

Radin, in this same letter, goes on to speculate that if he ever were to form a school of anthropology of his own, "They [the students] are going to be steeped in all the benefits of the historical imagination, error or no error" (1919, 23 December).

As Arthur Vidich states so clearly and well in his Introduction to The Method and Theory of Ethnology:

As a culture historian, he [Radin] was able to see that ethnology could not aspire to the exactness of the natural and physical sciences as far as logical methods were concerned, and that ethnology "need properly have no purpose any more than a description of the civilization of Greece or England had a purpose other than that of being a specific account of a given culture," and that the lack of scientific method did not interfere with "the correctness of the pictures Thucydides drew of Greece, Gibbon of Rome or Burckhardt of the Italian Renaissance." [Vidich 1955:xxxiv]

Radin, combining this historical attitude with the knowledge that the ethnological observer is himself a historical creature, subject to new planes of understanding as his intellectual vision grows, found it apparent that the ethnologist could never be sure that he had exhausted all the possibilities of his data at any particular state of his research. He is forced to continually entertain provisional attitudes towards

conclusions, since one cannot know in advance that later work and further information will not lead to different planes of understanding.

To Radin, the construct of a time frame was not of such seminal importance. Further, he argued that it was possible to reconstruct time sequences simply by examining the texts of the societies under study. He points this out very closely in his The Method and Theory of Ethnology:

The possibility of establishing some kind of sequence for a given culture from internal evidence, from the careful and painstaking study of its specific religion, mythology, social organizations, etc. This is rejected as utterly speculative and unscientific. In other words, it was scientific and historical to point out the northern elements in Navajo mythology, but it would be reprehensively speculative to attempt to study Navajo mythology in order to see whether it could throw some light on Navajo history and the growth of Navajo ideas and customs. In thus rejecting this type of interpretation, I think they have made not only a serious mistake but one that has had somewhat momentous consequences for the development of ethnology in the United States. That such a method is beset with the greatest dangers, that the pitfalls are numerous, that it leads to speculation, all this is manifest, but that tangible results of importance can be obtained from it if enough factual material has been collected in the right manner is equally manifest to anyone who attempts it. Whatever its drawbacks, it is closer to the core of things than the results secured through the manipulation of artificial and static culture areas. [Radin 1955:31-32]

In attacking the Boasian school in this manner he alienated not only Boas but many of his contemporaries. Both Lowie and Kroeber were uncomfortable with the concepts of culture areas, just as they were with the exclusion of the individual and the purely quantitative methodology in ethnology, and this was particularly true of Lowie. However, they never openly rebelled against the methodology as Radin did.

It was Radin who stood forth and summarized his stance in his classic, The Method and Theory of Ethnology: An Essay in Criticism, where he openly stated his refusal to use the ethnological and historical methods of the Boasians, as he found them to be both artificial and inadequate. Ironically, Radin's convictions were not far removed from Boas' own ideal that the study of societies must be historically based.

Radin devoted himself for fifty years to the study of the religion, philosophy, literature and history of one American Indian society, working and re-working the material gathered from them over a five-year period and through this recording their history. Boas, however, found it unproductive to send out ethnologists for more than limited periods of time. Most of these individuals were in teaching positions.

Field work was therefore generally relegated and limited to the long vacation period. Nor were there many ethnologists willing to devote their lives to one society. Other than Radin himself, only one such comes to mind and that was George Cushing among the Zuni. Ironically, in adhering to the Boasian principle as it was initially set out, Radin eclipsed both his peers and his mentor, although he was to receive little recognition in America for his work. Radin refused to perceive societies as patchwork quilts of cultural traits. His rebellion against the school of Boas is nowhere more evident than in his antipathy toward Kroeber.

Kroeber's insistence--in agreement with Boas, despite other disagreements--that ethnology was a natural science whose subject matter was composed of discrete, isolatable, and objectively determinable elements which could be traced and categorized on their own terms, did violence to Radin's focus on the person as the index and measure of culture. Kroeber's approach violated his perception that to probe deeply enough into particular forms was to reveal universal meanings. Kroeber's view also abused Radin's sense of history as the human agent, as the agency for revealing the nature of humanity (including those aspects that he believed existed outside the framework of history) and the necessary conditions for human fulfillment. In short, Radin believed that in the deepest ethnological sense (not in the ethical sense), Kroeber's work lacked historical integrity. That summarized his critique of American ethnology in general. [Diamond 1981:86]

The Cost of Criticism

Radin would proceed in his own direction, in his own way, using his own world historical approach for recording the histories of American Indian societies which he saw within the larger framework of world societies, not simply relegated to the designation "primitive." Obviously, by taking this position he alienated himself from the predominant school of thought of his time, that of Boas. His sense of integrity, however, remained intact.

Radin, not for lack of opportunity but for lack of a desire to tie himself to any specific academic institution for any great length of time, nevertheless worked for many prestigious universities for short periods of time. He taught, for instance, at Berkeley, at Fiske University, at the University of Chicago, at Kenyon College and in the last two years of his life, at Brandeis University. He was well known and respected both as a scholar and an ethnologist in Europe. He lectured at all four of the major Swedish universities. He was a frequent lecturer both at Cambridge and Oxford as well as Manchester and the Jung Institute in Zurich. In the last part of his life he

worked for the Bollingen Foundation, acting as an arbiter of grants. However, he never gathered around him a following of students in the mode of Kroeber, Lowie and (late in his all too short life) his friend Sapir, as he was never tied to any university long enough to do so.

As the youngest son of a traditional Jewish family, Radin was expected to be a scholar. What Radin became was a wandering scholar in the most traditional sense; what in the Old Country would have been called the "intellectual of the streets"; that is, a teacher, scholar, or rabbi who gathered wisdom everywhere and drew about him a following of students with whom he shared insights and ideas. The classroom for such intellectuals was the community: for Radin it became a different community, in America and Europe, both in and out of academic institutions.

How much Radin felt this to be a loss is problematical. Radin's diverse following of students had a different composition. They came from many institutions: from the Labor School of Oakland, the Starr King School of the Ministry, the experimental Black Mountain College and from many prestigious universities in America and in Europe. Most

importantly, this following was comprised of any student who came in contact with him, for he left his imprint on all of them. He was first and foremost a Socratic teacher.

Radin's Political Perspective

An aspect of Radin that must be considered as possibly having harmed him both in his academic life and in his relationship with his contemporaries was the speculation that his politics were to the extreme left. I think it would be extreme to think of Radin as a dedicated Marxist. It would probably be more exact to say that he had the socialism that very often accompanied the humanism of the Haskalah. It became sharpened and honed in America to become more radical. He was not a Marxist anthropologist but an anthropologist with a keen awareness of social inequities in technocratic societies that did not fare well when compared with the American Indian societies he studied.

If one were asked to state briefly and succinctly what are the outstanding positive features of aboriginal civilizations, I, for one, would have no hesitation in answering that there are three: the respect for the individual, irrespective of age or sex; the amazing degree of social and political integration achieved by them; and the existence therein of a concept of personal security which transcends all governmental forms and all tribal and group interests and conflicts. [Radin 1953: 11]

Every individual in the society had not only the right to but could be assured of those things necessary to

survival: food, clothing, shelter--which were commodities to be shared, not hoarded.

His radicalism was well described by Stanley Diamond:

Radin was both a marginal man and profoundly radical but his radicalism lay in the general historical meaning of his work, not in elaborated, or even specific political formulations or tactics. That meaning derives from his general conception of primitive society. [Diamond 1981: 86]

METHOD

The author of this thesis has had access to and read the voluminous correspondence between Paul Radin and Edward Lowie, Alfred Kroeber, Edward Sapir and Franz Boas.

Methods included:

1) A reading and re-reading of Paul Radin's published works.

2) Taped interviews with academics and non-academics, including individuals who had studied under Radin and members of Radin's family.

3) Non-taped conversations with persons who had also known Paul Radin personally, including Dr. Claude Levi-Strauss.

Further materials drawn upon included:

1) A Symposium held at San Francisco State University in September, 1984, in which the participants were Dr. Maurice Stein of Brandeis University; Dr. Stanford Lyman, then of The New School for Social Research; Robin Wells, then adjunct professor in the Department of Anthropology, San Francisco State University; Mrs. Doris Radin, widow of

the late Dr. Paul Radin; and Mary Fast Wolf (then Mary Sacharoff).

2) Correspondence between the author and both academic and non-academic individuals who had known Paul Radin. These include Dr. Cora Du Bois of Harvard University; Dr. Maurice Stein of Brandeis University; Dr. Arthur Vidich of The New School for Social Research, New York; Dr. Richard Werbner of the University of Manchester, England; Dr. Nancy Lurie, Curator of Anthropology, Milwaukee Public Museum; and Dr. Kurt Wolff of Brandeis University.

3) Other people corresponded with included members of the Radin-Theodore family, most notably Anita Radin of New York, Radin's niece, and Helen Sarason, his cousin. There is also considerable correspondence with persons who knew Dr. Radin and whose lives were touched by him.

DISCUSSION

Dimensions of Radin's Scholarship

From what has been stated above it is clear that Paul Radin, product of the humanist school, ethnologist and historian, was an individual with a strong sense of integrity. He adhered to his own principles for the rest of his life.

His argument with the school of Boas and all the spin-offs of the school of Boas was based on what he himself was.

Radin's ideas, as I previously stated, were never disseminated through a following of students who had studied under him in one particular academic institution. In all of my explorations for preparing this thesis, I have found only one student who studied under him for any period in excess of a year. He totally changed that student's concept of what constituted a valid approach to anthropology, and directed him away from the popular tenets of the anthropology of that period of the late 1950's. The student, now a Professor of Anthropology at an English

university, never regretted it (Werbner 1982).

Radin was known for his openness to students just as he was known for his indifference toward educational administrators.

His home in whatever city he lived in was always open to students. It was a gathering place. It was the agora of Radin's Socratic method of teaching. It is virtually impossible to determine from the many individuals I have interviewed the degree to which he affected individual scholarship and individual lives. However, in over thirty interviews and voluminous correspondence with people who had contact with him, I have not encountered anyone whose perspective was not in some way altered by their encounter, be it as student or friend, with this Socratic teacher.

With Paul Radin the question was never one of "who said it" but of what was being said. No matter what the source, wisdom was wisdom and philosophy was validly philosophy. This cut across all cultures and traditions, including that of Europe. He never approached from a limited historical perspective as it affected a particular society, but from a world historical perspective.

Radin had been classically educated in the history of Greece and Rome. He read both Latin and Greek. He was well versed in European history and was particularly knowledgeable in the history of England. He refused to differentiate between intellectual developments in Western cultures as history recorded them and intellectual developments in American Indian cultures. To him, these had equal merit. Because of his broad schooling in history and his humanism he was never able to categorize one wisdom as stronger, worthier or better than another. He saw all world philosophies as having virtue in themselves, including those of societies with oral and not written traditions. That these were not recognized by the hierarchies of Western civilization as represented in the universities and other academic institutions is unfortunate.

Western anthropologists, even those who tried to approach from a historic perspective, nevertheless unwittingly and all too often indulged in a somewhat slanted ranking of world cultures with Western civilization still ranking first, and approached societies with an air of patronization. This regrettably somewhat persists even in the anthropology

of the late 20th century, in spite of all of our methodology designed to exclude such biases.

Radin understood it as the task of the anthropologist and the intellectual to understand the relationship of the originally oral and then written works, of which the Iliad and the Odyssey are excellent examples, as well as the pre-literate texts which he had so carefully collected with painstaking accuracy to ensure valid transposition from the oral to the written mode. He felt that these texts should be afforded every bit the same stature as Western texts, for these too were the basis of a common humanity; a universal wisdom that all societies could learn from, as long as they did not set themselves above learning (Stein 1982).

I believe that Radin also realized that the energy of these oral canons transposed to written texts, but still in the oral tradition, were in many senses more vital and alive than written documents by the very fact that they were not written down but were orally transmitted from generation to generation. Thus, they became the possession not of a literate intellectual elite but of the entire society (Stein

1982). Radin strove mightily to make accessible what Sapir had called "a vision of genuine culture."

Radin was fully aware of the pragmatic realities of life in any society. He could certainly assess the basic needs of all individuals, the needs that sustained life, across all societies. He was equally aware, however, of the importance of the spiritual facets of societies and the very strong necessity for religions within societies; they were part of the social arrangement. They were "the validation of realities" (Radin 1955:24). This was very much the case in American Indian societies. He could directly link this to parallels in Western societies, particularly in certain historical periods--such as the pre-Renaissance era when religion was a major part of the social arrangement, albeit in a way more prone to restrict and repress individuals rather than including them in the integral functions of the society.

To Radin, looking historically at religion, there were parallels between all world religions but tragic differences between the Judeo-Christian ethic that was to dominate the Western world and the religions of American Indians. These differences would

inevitably destroy and alter the social arrangements of the latter (Stein 1982).

Although a non-religious man, Radin had a great respect for the spirituality of humanity, something common to all people and this stands out sharply in his work Primitive Man as Philosopher and The World of Primitive Man, but he made a strong distinction between spirituality, mysticism and superstition. He realized that as societies became more mercantile and profit motivated and less communal, spirituality could easily become superstition leading to the emergence of an exploitative priestly class. His dialectic with religion was between spirituality and orthodoxy as represented by American Indian societies, on the one hand, and Western Judeo-Christian principals, on the other.

Radin had the ability to step beyond the paradigms (such as they are in anthropology) and use his own observation to perceive the depth of human experience and to attempt to record and pass it on as a contribution to humanity's universal knowledge. That contribution, I feel, is unique in his generation of anthropologists, for he devoted a life time to this task.

The hope that such a passing on might result in Western society learning the value of other world views and communal dynamics may well have been in vain, or he would be more read and better understood today.

Radin detested cultural chauvinism. He could perceive in American Indian thinkers insights as deep as those of a Kant or a Spinoza. Wisdom was a universal commodity not to be wasted, not to be stashed away in storehouses of Western universities and colleges, but to be a gift across all cultures, accessible to anyone (Werbner 1982).

It is, therefore, easy to perceive why he was out of step with his contemporaries. He had little respect for the academy, never tying himself into it, although I am sure that there were times when it must have been very tempting to do so. In turn, however, this lack of identification with any one academy left him with a considerable measure of freedom. It allowed him the advantage of perceiving dynamics from his own perspective, staying on the fringes of a society, never making the mistake of overidentifying with them but recording myth, religion and philosophy for their contribution to human wisdom.

Nor did he ever make the error of taking a final and unmovable stance on any of his assumptions. He was all too aware that current wisdom can change in the light of new perspectives and new facts. This sometimes irked even those who deeply admired him, for he always refused to take a final stance, as a new wisdom or a new truth could emerge at any time from any source to overturn his conclusions.

It is for this reason, I feel, that he so often criticized his contemporaries, quite over and above the pin-pricks that he administered in The Method and Theory of Ethnology, for often having neither the desire nor inclination to dig down to the truth; although they insisted that what they set forth was the ultimate truth.

He felt that to record a culture, one had to know that culture from the inside, insofar as a person not a member of the society could do so. The only way that anyone could know it from the inside other than being a native of the society was to harvest the collective wisdom that had passed down through the generations and to record it.

Radin was a man who lived in a blaze of cerebral reality. He had survived all sorts of

personal setbacks and he had been deprived of many of the honors extended to intellectuals in Western society. He sometimes was hard put to survive even economically, particularly in the early days of his contretemps with Boas. Yet this was the man who best acted as the interpreter between Western culture and non-Western societies as personified by societies such as that of the Winnebago.

He saw very clearly, and it is evident in such works as The World of Primitive Man, that in an industrial society it is infinitely more difficult for individuals to maintain independence and interdependence, for the whole range of such societies is to make independence contingent upon financial security, material acquisitions and the body politic. This is a very different scenario from that which had existed in the cultures that he had studied where individuals maintained their independence but still worked in an interdependent relationship with those around them. Their unity with one another and with nature was an everyday way of life. For people living in a highly technological society such unity was a virtual impossibility.

What Paul Radin saw in his recording of non-Western societies he perceived with a sense of history and with a sensitivity to social arrangements throughout history. He had an understanding of humanity and of the societies that this humanity creates around itself. Social arrangements of all societies, he felt, must be of importance to us from a global historical perspective.

Only when as anthropologists we begin to see as clearly as Radin did that in industrial societies the individual is lost because the social arrangement is dictated not by common interdependence but to accommodate a profit establishment; only then will we realize that with this type of society, where the individual becomes a surplus commodity, horrors can occur. The individual becomes expendable, and so the Holocaust of Germany, the genocide of South Africa and the mass murder of American Indian people under the apologia of Manifest Destiny become not only possible but can be rationalized away.

Radin is certainly aware of the dangers of the growing technological age of mankind when he states, somewhat wryly in The Method and Theory of Ethnology,

The difference between the aboriginal cultures and our own is not merely that the former were barred

from the consequences [a literate elite] that flowed from the possession of a written language and machines, but that they were barred from the consequences [author's emphasis] that flowed from having both of them together. [Radin 1955:266]

It is very evident in the last chapters of The World of Primitive Man that he perceived all cultures, Western and non-Western, as being in a state of flux. A constant alteration was going on in even the simplest of these societies. They were not static but changing, and indeed, as we are well aware in this period of the end of the 20th century, not only are they changing, they are virtually being devoured by the ever-expanding technocratic world around them. In the realization of this constant change, Radin knew that all he was recording of the dynamic of a society was the dynamic of that society as it was at that particular moment in its history. The philosophy, however, the oral tradition, the great intellectual contributions of that society were things to be recorded. They stood as monuments and always had, be they Homer's Odyssey, Shakespeare's plays or the Winnebago ritual of The Road of Life and Death, or The Trickster.

Radin re-emphasized the universality of all human experience--the universal role of the religious man; the thinker in any society, Western or

preliterate; the validity of the role of the individual. He reaffirmed that there were no real differences, that human experience was a common equation and that there were, or should be, no hierarchies in human wisdom. He saw a direct link not only in non-Western cultures but in the very foundations of Western cultures between deity, world and social institutions. He recognized that the moral and ethical values for man and society derived from this triumverate and that they are different and yet the same in all societies. He spoke for the universality of the human spirit and the universality of human thought.

He ends his The Method and Theory of Ethnology by saying, almost imploringly, in that last paragraph:

To say with Boas and so many ethnologists and sociologists that the culture pattern hides its [human nature's] knowledge from us forever is a counsel of despair. Some significant light can surely be obtained even if today the technique for this type of investigation has not as yet been perfected. Here again, I feel, that a psychoanalyst like Jung is on the correct trail.
[Radin 1955:267]

Of what value, then, is Paul Radin to us today as a teacher? I have tried to point out in this work those things that he brought to his era of anthropology. Surely at the end of the 20th century we

are more sensitive to the roles of individuals in their societies and yet we still, as anthropologists, insist on compartmentalizing, on putting tidy frames around all these things that we investigate, and somehow fail to see the totality of the individual in an increasingly technological world; in a computerized and nuclear world. We still have to approach from too many different directions. We are structuralists. We are sociobiologists. We are ethnomethodologists. We are ethnoarchaeologists. All are little specializations in our one discipline; each holding a possible piece of the puzzle which, when put together, if ever, would give us the universal truth of what constituted humanity, for which Radin always sought. We could still learn from him. Even in the field of biography of members of non-Western societies, we are still interpreting all too frequently what we feel needs to be stressed; what it is of importance to us to understand, not necessarily what the individual is trying to communicate.

Radin's insistence on the use of the text as the only true way to record history is still a valid concept. One cannot help feeling that Radin would look with great interest at the volumes of as yet

untranslated materials, written in the native language using the syllabary of the time they were written. I think that he would be enthused at the concept of such texts being translated, not by Western anthropologists, but by such members of the society who are qualified to do so: those fluent in their own language and in their understanding of the philosophical concepts embodied in the language; such individuals can present the spirit of the word and reflect the historical period that these texts describe rationally, reasonably, understandably and above all, accurately.

Can such teachers ever arise again in our "end-of-the-century" society? It must be borne in mind that scholars of that early 20th century era were very broadly schooled in all the facets of their own intellectual traditions. Radin was such a man. His type of scholarship was also made possible by an accident of history: he came of age in a period when there had been no great wars in Europe for approximately forty years. During this period many young men, whose families could afford to send them to Europe, traveled to the major universities of Europe and of England, wandering in search of knowledge and bringing back with them to America the intellectual

currents of the Old World--much as their fathers (in some cases products of the Haskalah as Radin's father was) had brought with them the intellectual currents of the Enlightenment.

Two world wars of a magnitude that could hardly have been conceivable in the late 19th century shattered that world forever. It is very difficult, if not impossible today, to hope that this type of intellectual will arise again to teach a new generation, not because the potential does not exist, but because the freedom of the Wanderjahre is out of reach of most scholars, given the political climate and the paucity of financial support for such undertakings.

The Lowies, Radins, Boases, Sapirs and Kroebers were the giants who formulated the discipline of anthropology, as we still know and are somewhat guided by it today, with all of our myriad diversities and overspecialization.

These men are today relegated more and more to the background as new schools of ethnology come to the fore. Men of such incredible erudition are lost to us in our generation. We feel that we have grown beyond them in our discipline but a retrospective might give us, in our era of anthropology, some valuable insights:

for one, that "the more things change, the more they are the same." Certainly, the thing that remains the same is, or should be, the search for a common humanity and what constitutes its totality. The question was there in the formulative years of the school of Boas and it remains with us still.

The loss of men such as Paul Radin, with his childlike wonder at all human experience, who searched for that universality of the total human experience, a search that he diligently recorded for over fifty years, is of particular significance for historians and ethnologists alike.

Paul Radin died in New York City on February 21, 1959. Among the obituaries written about him, there is one in particular that is especially fitting for this remarkable culture historian. It was written for him by Dr. Kurt Wolff of Brandeis University, and it is simple and beautiful. Titled "A Small Fond Salute," it says:

You liked everybody's world to be as large as your own and had so often to remind yourself, and not suffer from it, but most people's weren't and aren't. The least corner of that large world, which you almost alone discovered and didn't make a home, in turn, for more than a handful of others no matter how much it got celebrated and smothered in fame was the world of primitive man as philosopher where you announced having landed in 1927--but there had been many voyages before and many after,

because you sniffed and explored and brought home all your life in more than one country and in more than one culture in the same country, for instance, among the Winnebago and among graduate students in anthropology from Columbia to Berkeley and in between. [Wolff 1961:5]

No tribute was ever more singularly appropriate.

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Appendix 1

CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL RADIN'S LIFE

- 1883 Born April 2, 1883 in Lodz, Russian Poland.
- 1884 Moved with family to America. Lived in Elmira, New York.
- 1888 Entered College of the City of New York. Graduated in 1902.
- 1902-04 Attended Columbia University. Studied zoology in first year and changed to history in second year.
- 1905-06 Went to Europe. First year at University of Munich and second year at University of Berlin. Traveled to Prague, Bohemia. Worked in the Museum at Prague with ethnologist V. Frič.
- 1907 Returned to America. Majored in Anthropology at Columbia University with a minor in statistics. Second minor was in history.
- 1908-09 First field trip to Winnebago.
- 1910 Ph.D. from Columbia. Death of his father Adolph Radin. Married Rose Robinson. Tutored German at the College of the City of New York.
- 1911-12 Position with Bureau of American Ethnology. Field work among the Winnebago.
- 1912-13 Winnebago field work. Joint Columbia-Harvard fellowship to study Zapotec linguistics and mythology in Mexico.
- 1913-17 Geological Survey of Canada under Edward Sapis. Field work among the Ojibwa of S.E. Ontario. Interspersed residence in Canada

- with residence in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where his wife was recovering from tuberculosis. Many of his Ojibwa field notes were worked up in Santa Fe.
- 1917-20 University of California, Berkeley. Lecturer in Anthropology. Taught at Mills College, Berkeley, California.
- 1920-25 Moved to England. Research student, Ph.D. candidate. Research subject: "Organization of the American Indians." Withdrew his candidacy in 1922. Unofficial lecturer at Christ College, Cambridge, under W. H. R. Rivers. Met Carl Jung in 1925 and spoke at Jung Seminar in Zurich, Switzerland.
- 1925-27 Returned to America. Position with University of Michigan. Field work with the Ottawa.
- 1927 Yale-American Museum Natural History fellowship. Study of Mexican languages. Taught briefly at University of Chicago.
- 1927-30 Fiske University. Nashville, Tennessee.
- 1931-40 U.C. Berkeley. Lecturer, fall semester, 1931 and spring semester, 1931. Worked on analysis of Penutian languages. Edited survey of minority groups in the San Francisco Bay Area. Catalogued Sutro Library Collection. Married Doris Woodward in 1932.
- 1941-44 Black Mountain College. Black Mountain, North Carolina. Taught alternate semesters, moving back and forth between Black Mountain College and University of California, Berkeley. Taught a course, "The Living Races of Man," at The Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, in the winter quarter 1942-43.
- 1945-49 Kenyon College. Gambier, Ohio. Taught one semester per year. Worked as an Editor for the Bollingen Foundation and later as an Arbitrer of Grants.

- 1949-52 Lectured at the four major Swedish Universities and at Eranos conferences in Ascona, Switzerland.
- 1952-57 Lugano, Switzerland. Worked on grants from the Bollingen Foundation. Traveled to England to lecture at Oxford, Cambridge, and Manchester universities. Lectured at the Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland.
- 1957-59 Brandeis University. Waltham, Massachusetts. Chair in Anthropology.
- 1959 Died February 21 in New York City.

Appendix 2

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Compiled by Richard Werbner

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